

Frequently Asked Questions about the Proposed Siting of a NASCAR Motor Speedway/Family Recreation Facility in the Marysville-Arlington Area

The following frequently asked questions and answers are provided by City of Marysville and Snohomish County officials exploring the feasibility of siting a NASCAR motor speedway and family recreation facility in the Marysville-Arlington area. The International Speedway Corporation based in Daytona Beach, Fla. is interested in building a NASCAR facility in the Pacific Northwest, and is looking at numerous sites throughout Washington and Oregon.

This page also incorporates 24 questions answered by City and County officials at the request of SCAR (Snohomish County Citizens Against a Race Track). It also includes a transcript from the "questions and answers" segment of an informational forum hosted by the City and County on June 1, 2004. The questions were submitted by many among the 600-plus who attended the event.

What is ISC, NASCAR?

ISC stands for the "International Speedway Corporation." ISC develops and owns auto race facilities around the nation. NASCAR stands for "National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing." NASCAR is the governing association for stock car racing.

Where is the 'Conceptual Proposal' for a NASCAR track?

The City of Marysville and Snohomish County have jointly put together a conceptual proposal for a NASCAR facility south of 172nd Street. The proposal identifies site alternative configurations. The east side of I-5 presents the best location options, and since the release of the conceptual proposal, the Site B Lakewood option has been removed from consideration. The conceptual proposal was submitted to ISC representatives in April 2004. ISC officials have indicated they are looking for 500 to 1,000 acres for a site in the Pacific Northwest. You can download the proposal from the City of Marysville website at http://ci.marysville.wa.us/DownloadFTP/Marysville_SpdwyFamRecArea_Proposal.pdf.

What does the conceptual proposal include?

The conceptual proposal is for a racing facility, recreational development and retail/commercial development. The details of a proposal have not been developed at this point. Such details will be further developed if this site is chosen by ISC as viable.

How many NASCAR races will be at the facility?

NASCAR plans on a between 2 and 4 races per year. This is based on the use profile for other NASCAR facilities. These will be the large events utilizing the capacity of the facility. Otherwise, the track will not be in use or will have limited use.

How many people will this facility hold?

The conceptual proposal is targeting a facility seating 80,000.

Won't such a facility have substantial impacts to the area including traffic and noise?

As with any development, there will be impacts and there will be a full environmental study of them before any facility is finally approved. However, these impacts need to be measured against the other land use options that are likely to take place in this area. For instance, residential or industrial development will present significant traffic impacts that will be realized during peak traffic flow periods.

Will such a facility impact the Arlington Airport?

ISC/NASCAR facilities are frequently located near airports. They can and do operate as a compatible use with airport operations. For example, the Daytona Speedway is immediately adjacent to the Daytona Airport. The facility will need to be designed to meet FAA requirements as well as those of other federal and state agencies. Proponents have already looked at other facilities in the country and have had preliminary discussions with representatives of the FAA and Washington State Department of Transportation - Aviation Division.

What is the anticipated local economic benefit of a NASCAR facility?

NASCAR venues similar in size to the track proposed in our area are reporting approximately \$200 million in economic benefit to the local community.

How many full-time jobs will the facility provide?

It is estimated that the track will provide approximately 50 - 100 full time jobs. However, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Other communities with NASCAR venues report as many as 1,000 additional jobs associated with the economic expansion related to the track.

How will our existing traffic infrastructure be able to handle the increased traffic on race days?

In order to handle the large number of fans who will travel to the facility on race days, many of the existing thoroughfares and interchanges in the Marysville-Arlington area will need to be improved. County, state and municipal governments are committed to working together to ensure that the necessary traffic improvements will be provided.

Will the ISC/NASCAR be given special tax breaks?

Washington State law is very unique. The types of tax incentives that the ISC was offered in other states are not possible in our state. ISC knows this, and has discussed with our elected officials other options such as tax increment financing (if approved by the state legislature in 2005).

What impact will the facility have on property values?

While it is difficult to predict exactly how individual properties will be affected, our research indicates that property values around similar venues have increased with the introduction of a NASCAR venue.

Are there any preliminary drawings available to view?

Because the International Speedway Corporation (ISC) has not chosen a site, we have only a conceptual idea of what the track will look like. It will be a 3/4 to 1 mile oval with seating for up to 80,000 spectators. The best drawings available are in the city's proposal at <http://ci.marysville.wa.us/>.

How will the track compliment the quality surrounding area?

*The proposal submitted by Snohomish County and the City of Marysville takes this into consideration. The proposal calls for a regional trail system that hooks into the Centennial Trail as well as significant improvements to salmon habitat. The proposal has open space with grass parking and vegetative buffers. **Are there any area view pictures of existing track available for us to view?***

You can view pictures and detailed information about existing ISC owned NASCAR tracks at <http://www.iscmotorsports.com/>.

Who can I contact for more information about the ISC proposal?

Please contact Mayor Dennis Kendall, (360) 651-5000, e-mail: mayor@ci.marysville.wa.us

Doug Buell, Community Information Officer, (360) 651-5021, e-mail: dbuell@ci.marysville.wa.us

Mark Funk, Senior Management Analyst, Snohomish County, (425) 388-3623, e-mail: mark.funk@co.snohomish.wa.us.

**Questions answered by the City and County at the request of Snohomish County Citizens
Against a Race Track (SCAR)**

1. Who pays for all the proposed highway expansions, interchanges and surface road expansions that will be required to bring in excess of 80,000 people to a racetrack on one day? Who will pay for all of the rest of the infrastructure required? What are the specific revenue streams contemplated for payment of these improvements? Will ISC pay for any portion on these improvements? If so, how much? How are any cost overruns to be paid? Who will pay for road repairs and maintenance?

Marysville has retained Pretest Engineering to conduct a study to determine transportation improvements necessary to accommodate race day traffic. The level of financing and type of financing necessary has yet to be determined. Washington State currently has limited incentives available to attract new business/economic development opportunities to the region. Any future development in this area will require transportation improvements.

2. Will you ensure that an economic analysis that includes both COST and potential BENEFITS is conducted, with truly non-biased panel members (not members with a vested interest in the track, such as Crown Distributing?)

Yes, if the Marysville site is selected, additional economic analysis will be conducted. Such an analysis is necessary for bond sales. The work done thus far is credible and further work and research is necessary.

3. An environmental study was undertaken in the 1990s by the City of Marysville for the Urban Growth Area north of Marysville which concluded the area was not environmentally suited for large developments. Recently, Marysville authorized a second study, by a different firm, and came up with a more positive reassessment. Why were the results of the first study discarded?

We are uncertain as to the environmental study referenced by this question. This area has and continues to be studied in various environmental and land use analyses by the City of Marysville, Snohomish County and the City of Arlington. All jurisdictions will continue to review and collect data that will allow well-informed decisions concerning future land use and environmental policies for the area.

4. We understand that Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) is being considered for this project. How large is the TIF District contemplated and how many millions of dollars in TIF Bonds area required? Since TIF requires approval by the legislature prior to use in Washington, are any other forms of financing planned? What local programs will suffer as a result of this redistribution of revenue? Can you assure the residents of Snohomish County that current service levels will continue to be met once tax dollars are allocated to repayment of the bonds?

Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) is one of several possible financing options. If Marysville is selected as the preferred site, local officials will begin looking at legislative options that would benefit the citizens of the region. Until the site selection is announced, it is premature to research possible funding options in great detail as we do not have adequate information to proceed with such research.

5. We understand that some significant races have been pulled from existing tracks, with devastating economic impacts. Will ISC guarantee at least 2 major races per year, every year? Will there be a legally binding agreement to ensure that they do not back down on the commitment to have two big races here every year? For how many years will any agreement be binding?

ISC has indicated a need for a speedway in the Pacific Northwest because there currently is not a speedway in this market. NASCAR is one of the fastest-growing sports in the country and the fan base in the Pacific Northwest is expanding rapidly. ISC is confident that there will be two major races each year. A contract negotiation process with ISC will take place if Marysville is selected as the preferred site.

6. Marysville only has one freeway with three lanes in each direction that will be available to channel all of the traffic to and from the racetrack. The track at Fontana, as well as existing tracks in many other cities, has four freeways within a couple miles of the track. Can you explain why Fontana is a reasonable example to use in your statements that there shouldn't be traffic problems here?

As noted, the City of Marysville has contracted with Perteet Engineering to conduct a study on race day traffic impacts and how best to deal with the issue. California Speedway in Fontana was only one location that we are examining; it is not the only model. The issues mentioned will be looked at during the study process. It is important to note that ISC's impacts would be three weekends per year and proposed legislative action would allow for transportation improvements. Other development slated for this location would have 365 days of impact per year and transportation improvements would be piecemeal and not conducted in a master-planned approach. Other examples of event venues closer to home include Husky Stadium, Seahawks Stadium and Safeco Field. All have a number of significant events that require traffic control.

7. How will local businesses benefit when the traffic flow will be set up to get people into and out of the racetrack (i.e., shuttled onto I-5) as quickly as possible? Will additional commercial development occur as a result of the track and if so, have you studied the impacts of that increase in commercial development on the existing business in Marysville and Arlington throughout the year? Why is a racetrack essential to get that business here? Have you analyzed whether additional commercial development would come WITHOUT a racetrack?

Local businesses will benefit because NASCAR fans typically travel from outside the region and stay for several days. Research shows that fans typically spend money within communities where speedways are located. The ISC model does generate additional commercial activity. Developments surrounding newer ISC facilities have consisted of first-class commercial development. If Marysville is selected as the preferred site, additional studies will be conducted to analyze the impacts of such development. It is difficult to precisely analyze the type of development that will occur if ISC does not select Marysville as the preferred site. Reasonable speculation includes light industrial, commercial, retail and residential.

8. The proponents of the track have repeatedly stated that the proposed site north of Marysville will be developed eventually for housing or manufacturing. If the proposed track is built, in what alternative area(s) does the county anticipate building new housing to accommodate the population growth that will occur in Snohomish County?

If Marysville is selected as the preferred site by ISC, Snohomish County will need to analyze the impact this will have on population projections. The county is currently undertaking the 10-Year Update of its Comprehensive Plan and is reviewing several growth projections independent of the ISC proposal.

9. On a given Saturday and Sunday, when traffic will be bumper-to-bumper, how will residents, within 5 miles of the racetrack, be able to attend church, especially if roads are changed to flow in only one direction in order to funnel vehicles to the racetrack?

As noted, Marysville has retained Pretest Engineering to conduct a study on race-day traffic impacts. Transportation management will be part of the work we are undertaking to address these impacts. Local impacts will be addressed as well.

10. Who will pay for the extra police and traffic control during race weeks?

ISC will be required to pay for police and traffic control during race activities.

11. Cascade Valley Hospital is the only local hospital in a 10-mile radius. During these events, what is your plan for transporting seriously ill and emergency patients to a local hospital?

An on-site medical clinic is part of the speedway facility that would be constructed by ISC. Providence General Medical Center, a major medical and trauma facility, also located in nearby Everett.

12. Other than construction workers building the track, how would you categorize the 2200 jobs that have been suggested will come to the area? How many jobs will be full-time and how many jobs will be part-time? What is the median wage expected to be paid for these jobs?

Employment is generated by construction, facility operations, and secondary impacts. Like other events facilities, an ISC facility will generate employment in other sectors of the local economy. ISC has indicated that the speedway would provide approximately 80 full-time employment opportunities. There would be other part-time positions available during race day events. We are not currently aware what the median wage would be for these positions.

13. What hotels and restaurants do you foresee will be built near the track, understanding that they would not be utilized most of the year?

Prospective hotels and restaurants would need to compile their own economic and marketing data to determine whether locating near the race track is a good business decision. Since other non-race related events at the race track facility would occur throughout the year, and additional commercial and retail uses are anticipated in the vicinity of the track that will draw shoppers and visitors, it should be anticipated that hotels and restaurants would want to locate in the vicinity.

14. Homeland Security will not permit any over flights within 3 miles of the racetrack during major events. What provisions area you prepared to make to the City of Arlington for the lost revenue due to flight restrictions and to the businesses located at the airport? Have your statements as to the economic benefits of the track taken into consideration the loss of revenue to the airport during racing events?

Homeland Security restrictions may vary. In fact, aircraft, including helicopters, do fly over facilities during events. Further study of this issue is underway. An initial meeting with FAA officials indicated that air operations at Arlington Airport could continue during race events. Special procedures, like those used for the Arlington Fly-In, would be used to allow aircraft to arrive and depart. Flight over the racetrack may be restricted during major race events (2-3 times per year). Regarding revenue, since the airport would not be closed, it is anticipated that there will be no revenue loss. In fact, additional aircraft would be expected to use Arlington in conjunction with race events, so there would potentially be an increase in airport revenue. This is an area that would require additional analysis if Marysville is selected by ISC as a preferred site.

15. What is the possibility that the size of the stadium will need to be expanded as it has in Texas and is planned in Kansas, to accommodate 120,000 or eventually 200,000? Who will pay to improvements to our roads then?

That is a business decision that ISC would need to make in the future if they choose to build a track here and would have to be addressed through the review process under state and local laws. If additional seating is anticipated by ISC, this would be taken into account during the Environmental Impact Study that will be required if Marysville is chosen by ISC as the preferred site.

16. Have you studied whether any other racetracks have been built right in the middle of existing residential areas of over 10,000? How many of these existing racetracks were built before housing came in, so that people could choose whether or not to live near a racetrack?

We visited California Speedway in Fontana. The area is somewhat similar to the Marysville/Arlington area under consideration. There is housing within close proximity of the speedway. Other events facilities are built in populated areas around the country, including in major urban areas.

17. What is your plan for moving the birds and fish that are endangered species but live in the affected area?

The Speedway and Family Recreation Area project is unique because it gives us the only opportunity to look at the entire site and deal with these issues on a larger scale. We would use the project to help drive some of the environmental restoration that we would like to see take place in this area. This opportunity probably would not take place if development occurs on a piecemeal basis. Having significant open space will benefit wildlife in the area. As noted, this entire area is slated for commercial and industrial development much like the Kent Valley. A complete Environmental Impact Study will need to be completed. Preliminary considerations include drainage of Quilceda Creek, relocation of Edgecomb Creek, and stream restoration. The Tulalip Tribes are interested in the relocation and enhancement of Edgecomb Creek (which is currently made up of drainage ditches), and will play a major role in designing this project. Preliminary work is underway to study these environmental issues.

18. Will race cars participate in practice time trials and track familiarization in the week(s) prior to racing events? What days and times are the time trials?

Probably not to a great extent, since race cars operate on a race circuit.

19. The Code of Federal Regulations sets a limit of 55 decibels for residential areas. What plans will be made to check and record noise levels in the neighborhoods adjacent to the track by an independent, recognized organization? Who will pay for this testing?

Noise impacts and mitigation measures will be studied in detail before a track is built. ISC would be required to meet noise regulations, and would be required to pay for noise mitigation.

20. Will you allow outdoor rock or other loud concerts at the racetrack? What other activities area planned for the track when it is not being used for NASCAR events?

Other events that would occur at the speedway have not been determined and would be subject to negotiation with ISC. Other activities common to ISC race tracks include driving schools, ride-along, car shows, charity walks/runs, facility rentals for film and television commercials, go kart races, etc.

21. During what hours will you place restrictions on the noise levels at the facility?

Any restrictions would be subject to negotiation with ISC. ISC has indicated that they do not anticipate night racing at this facility. Major races are televised and would be held during daylight hours to accommodate the east coast television market. Noise levels will be addressed in the course of noise studies and environmental review for this project.

22. Were any of the existing homeowners ever advised about the possibility of being located next door to a racetrack? We understand that hundreds of homes are going to be built in the area within a few miles of the racetrack. Is there any obligation to inform buyers before they purchase a home or is it buyer beware?

No. The conceptual proposal to site an ISC race track in Marysville did not develop until 2004. However, The Marysville ISC proposal was made public in April so that the public could be informed. It is not possible to notify homeowners of every possible land use action that may impact them in the future. For example, if ISC does not come to this area, it is not possible to notify homeowners what will develop. We have conducted - and will continue to conduct - an open process regarding this proposal.

Anecdotally, when a City-County delegation visited California Speedway in Fontana, we observed several new upscale homes under construction less than a mile from the track. Based on our conversations with local officials, there is no shortage of people interested in buying those homes despite being located near a race track.

23. Will you guarantee that the value of our homes will not decrease in value as a result of the ISC facility?

We cannot guarantee that home values will not decrease. Property values have increased where ISC has built race facilities.

24. Will you promise that there will be no high intensity TV lighting and evening races so we will not have visual as well as noise pollution?

Races on the West Coast are scheduled during the daytime. The 3-hour time difference to the East Coast enables networks to broadcast races at prime hours and thus attract higher numbers of fans in the Midwest and the East Coast.